R277. Education, Administration. [R277-515. Utah Educator Professional Standards. R277-515-1. Authority and Purpose. (1) This rule is authorized by: (a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests the general control and supervision of the public schools in the Board; (b) Subsection 53E 3-501(1)(a), which directs the Board to make rules regarding the certification of educators; (c) Title 53E, Chapter 6, Educator Licensing and Professional Practices Act, which provides all laws related to educator licensing and professional practices; and (d) Subsection 53E 3-401(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah Constitution and state law. (2) The purpose of this rule is to: (a) establish statewide standards for public school educators that provide notice to educators and prospective educators and notice and protection to public school students and parents; (b) recognize that licensed public school educators are professionals and, as such, should share common professional standards, expectations, and role model responsibilities; and (c) distinguish behavior for which educators shall receive license discipline from behavior that all Utah educators should aspire to and for which license discipline shall be initiated only in egregious circumstances or following a pattern of offenses. R277-515-2. Definitions. (1)(a) "Boundary violation" means crossing verbal, physical, emotional, and social lines that an educator must maintain in order to ensure security, and predictability in an educational environment. (b) A "boundary violation" may include the following, depending on the circumstances: (i) isolated, one on one interactions with students out of the line of sight of others; (ii) meeting with students in rooms with covered or blocked windows; (iii) telling risqué jokes to, or in the presence of a student; (iv) employing favoritism to a student; (v) giving gifts to individual students; (vi) educator initiated frontal hugging or other uninvited touching; (vii) photographing individual students for a non-educational purpose or use; (viii) engaging in inappropriate or unprofessional contact outside of educational program activities; (ix) exchanging personal email or phone numbers with a student for a non-educational purpose or use; (x) interacting privately with a student through social media, computer, or handheld devices; and (xi) discussing an educator's personal life or personal issues with a student. (c) "Boundary violations" does not include: (i) offering praise, encouragement, or acknowledgment; (ii) offering rewards available to all who achieve; (iii) asking permission to touch for necessary purposes; (iv) giving pats on the back or a shoulder; (v) giving side hugs; (vi) giving handshakes or high fives; (vii) offering warmth and kindness; (viii) utilizing public social media alerts to groups of students and parents; or (ix) contact permitted by an IEP or 504 plan. (2)(a) "Conviction" means the final disposition of a judicial action for a criminal offense, except in cases of a dismissal on the merits. (b) "Conviction" includes: (i) a finding of guilty by a judge or jury; (ii) a guilty or no contest plea; and (iii) a plea in abeyance. (3) "Core Standard" means a statement: (a) of what a student enrolled in a public school is expected to know and be able to do at a specific grade level or following completion of an (b) established by the Board in Rule R277-700 as required by Section 53E 3-501. (4) "Diversion agreement" means an agreement between a prosecutor and defendant entered into prior to a conviction delaying prosecution of a criminal charge for a specified period of time and contingent upon the defendant satisfying certain conditions. (5)(a) "Educator" or "professional educator" means a person who currently holds a Utah educator license, held a license at the time of an alleged offense, is an applicant for a license, or is a person in training to obtain a license. (b) "Professional educator" does not include a paraprofessional, a volunteer, or an unlicensed teacher in a classroom. (6) "Illegal drug" means a substance included in: (a) Schedules I, II, III, IV, or V established in Section 58-37-4; (b) Schedules I, II, III, IV, or V of the federal Controlled Substances Act, Title II, Pub. L. No. 91-513; or (c) any controlled substance analog. (7) Grooming" means befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child or a child's family to lower the child's inhibitions for emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. (8) "LEA" or "local education agency" for purposes of this rule includes the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. (9) "License applicant" means a person who is applying for: (a) an initial license: or (b) renewal of a license.

- (10) "Licensing discipline" means a sanction, including an admonition, a letter of warning, a written reprimand, suspension of license revocation of license, or other appropriate disciplinary measure, for violation of a professional educator standard. (11) "Misdemeanor offense," for purposes of this rule, does not include Class C or lower violations of Title 41, Utah Motor Vehicle Code (12) "Plea in abeyance" means a plea of guilty or no contest that is not entered as a judgment or conviction but is held by a court in abeyance for a specified period of time. (13) "Pornographic or indecent material" shall have the same meaning as defined in Subsection 76-10-1235(1)(a). (14) "School-related activity" means any event, activity, or program: (a) occurring at the school before, during, or after school hours; or (b) that a student attends at a remote location as a representative of the school or with the school's authorization, or both. (15) "Stalking" means the act of intentionally or knowingly engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person as defined in Section 76-5-106-5 (16)(a) "Under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug" means that a person: (i) is under the influence of alcohol, an illegal drug, or the combined influence of alcohol and drugs to a degree that renders the person incapable of effectively working in a public school; (ii) has sufficient alcohol in the person's body that a subsequent chemical test shows that the person has a blood or breath alcohol concentration of .08 grams or greater at the time of the test; or (iii) has a blood or breath alcohol concentration of .08 grams or greater during work hours at a public school. (b) An educator is presumed to be "under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug" if the educator refuses a lawful request, made with reasonable suspicion by the educator's LEA, to submit to a drug or alcohol test. (17) "Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission" or "UPPAC" means an advisory commission established to assist and advise the Board in matters relating to the professional practices of educators, as established by Section 53E-6-501. (18) "Weapon" means any item that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. R277-515-3. Educator as a Role Model of Civic and Societal Responsibility. (1) The professional educator is responsible for compliance with federal, state, and local laws. (2) The professional educator shall familiarize himself or herself with professional ethics and is responsible for compliance with applicable (3) Failing to strictly adhere to Subsection (4) shall result in licensing discipline in accordance with Rule R277-215. (4) The professional educator, upon receiving a Utah educator license: (a) may not be convicted of any felony or misdemeanor offense that adversely affects the individual's ability to perform an assigned duty and carry out the responsibilities of the profession, including role model responsibility; (b) may not be convicted of or commit any act of violence or abuse, including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of any person; (c) may not commit any act of cruelty to a child or any criminal offense involving a child; (d) may not be convicted of a stalking crime; (e) may not possess or distribute an illegal drug or be convicted of any crime related to an illegal drug, including a prescription drug not specifically prescribed for the individual: (f) may not engage in conduct of a sexual nature described in Section 53E 6-603; (g) may not be convicted of or subject to a diversion agreement for a sex-related or drug-related offense; (h) may not provide to a student or allow a student under the educator's supervision or control to consume an alcoholic beverage or unauthorized (i) may not attend school or a school related activity in an assigned employment related capacity while possessing, using, or under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug; (j) may not intentionally exceed the prescribed dosage of a prescription medication while at school or a school related activity; (k) shall cooperate in providing all relevant information and evidence to the proper authority in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency or by the Division of Child and Family Services regarding potential criminal activity, except that an educator may decline to give evidence against himself or herself in an investigation if the evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as that term is defined by the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution: (1) shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to law enforcement or the Division of Child and Family Services pursuant to Sections 53E 6 701 and 62A 4a 409 and comply with rules and LEA policy regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse; (m) shall strictly adhere to state laws regarding the possession of a firearm while on school property or at a school sponsored activity and enforce an LEA policy related to student access to or possession of a weapon; (n) may not solicit, encourage, or consummate an inappropriate relationship, whether written, verbal, or physical, with a student or minor; (o) may not engage in grooming of a student or minor; (p) may not: (i) participate in sexual, physical, or emotional harassment towards any public school age student or colleague; or (ii) knowingly allow harassment toward a student or colleague; (q) may not make inappropriate contact in any communication, including written, verbal, or electronic, with a minor, student, or colleague, regardless of age or location: (r) may not interfere or discourage a student's or colleague's legitimate exercise of political and civil rights, acting consistent with law and LEA policy; (s) shall provide accurate and complete information in a required evaluation of himself or herself, another educator, or student, as directed, consistent with the law; (t) shall be forthcoming with accurate and complete information to an appropriate authority regarding known educator misconduct that could adversely impact performance of a professional responsibility, including a role model responsibility, by himself or herself, or another;
- (w) shall notify the Superintendent at the time of application for licensure of past license disciplinary action or license discipline from another jurisdiction;

(v) shall provide accurate and complete information regarding qualifications, degrees, academic or professional awards or honors, and related

(u) shall provide accurate and complete information required for licensure, transfer, or employment purposes;

employment history when applying for employment or licensure;

	(x) shall notify the Superintendent honestly and completely of past criminal convictions at the time of the license application and renewal of
Liconagas	(x) shall notify the supermendent nonestry and completely of past extramal convictions at the time of the necesse appreciation and renewal of
licenses;	
	(y) shall provide complete and accurate information during an official inquiry or investigation by LEA, state, or law enforcement personnel; and
	(z) shall report an arrest, citation, charge, or conviction to the educator's LEA in accordance with Section R277-516-3.
	(5) An LEA shall report violations described in Subsection (4) to UPPAC.
	(6)(a) Failure to adhere to this Subsection (6) may result in licensing discipline in accordance with Rule R277-215.
	(b) A penalty shall be imposed, most readily, if an educator has received a previous documented warning from the educator's employer.
	(e) An educator may not:
	(i) exclude a student from participating in any program or deny or grant any benefit to any student on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national
origin, ma	rital status, political or religious belief, physical or mental condition, family, social, or cultural background, or sexual orientation; and
	(ii) may not engage in conduct that would encourage a student to develop a prejudice on the grounds described in Subsection (6)(c)(i) or any
other cons	istent with the law.
	(d) An educator shall maintain confidentiality concerning a student unless revealing confidential information to an authorized person serves the
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best intere	st of the student and serves a lawful purpose, consistent with:
	(i) 53E-9-202, Utah Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; and
	(ii) the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99.
	(e) Consistent with Title 67, Chapter 16, Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act, Section 53E-3-512, and rule, a professional educator:
	(i) may not accept a bonus or incentive from a vendor or potential vendor or a gift from a parent of a student, or a student where there may be the
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appearance of a conflict of interest or impropriety;	
	(ii) may not accept or give a gift to a student that would suggest or further an inappropriate relationship;
	(iii) may not accept or give a gift to a colleague that is inappropriate or furthers the appearance of impropriety;
	(iv) may accept a donation from a student, parent, or business donating specifically and strictly to benefit a student;
	(v) may accept, but not solicit, a nominal appropriate personal gift for a birthday, holiday, or teacher appreciation occasion, consistent with LEA
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	(vi) may not use the educator's position or influence to:
	(A) solicit a colleague, student, or parent of a student to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or participate in an activity
that financ	ially benefits the educator unless approved in writing by the LEA; or
	(B) promote an athletic camp, summer league, travel opportunity, or other outside instructional opportunity from which the educator receives
personal re	emuneration and that involve students in the educator's school system, unless approved in writing consistent with LEA policy and rule; and
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	(vii) may not use school property, a facility, or equipment for personal enrichment, commercial gain, or for personal uses without express
supervisor	permission.
R277-515	4. Educator Responsibility for Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment and Educational Standards.
	(1) A professional educator maintains a positive and safe learning environment for a student and works toward meeting an educational standard
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	(D) taking appropriate and reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of student information and education records stored or transmitted
unougn u	te use of electronic or computer technology; (v) shall work toward meeting an educational standard required by law;
	(vi) shall teach the objectives contained in a Core Standard;
	(vii) may not distort or alter subject matter from a Core Standard in a manner inconsistent with the law;
	(viii) shall use instructional time effectively consistent with LEA policy; and
	(ix) shall encourage a student's best effort in an assessment.
R277-515	-5. Professional Educator Responsibility for Compliance with LEA Policy.
	(1)(a) Failure to strictly adhere to this Subsection (1) shall result in licensing discipline in accordance with Rule R277-215.
	(b) A professional educator:
	(i) understands, respects, and does not violate appropriate boundaries:
	(A) established by ethical rules and school policy and directive in teaching, supervising, and interacting with a student or colleague; and
	(B) described in Subsection R277-515-2(1); and (ii) shall conduct financial business with integrity by honestly accounting for all funds committed to the educator's charge, as school
	(if) shall conduct manicial business with integrity by nonestry accounting for an runds committed to the educators charge, as school lities require, consistent with LEA policy.
	(2) An LEA shall report violations of Subsection (1) to UPPAC.
	(3) (a) Failure to adhere to this Subsection (3) may result in licensing discipline in accordance with Rule R277-215.
	(b) A penalty shall be imposed most readily, if an educator has received a previous documented warning from the educator's employer.
	(c) The professional educator:
	(i) understands and follows a rule and LEA policy;
	(ii) understands and follows a school or administrative policy, procedure, or documented directive specific to a rule or policy;
	(iii) resolves a grievance with a student, colleague, school community member, and parent professionally, with civility, and in accordance with
LEA polic	ey; and
	(iv) follows LEA policy for collecting money from a student, accounting for all money collected, and not commingling any school funds with
personal fi	unds.
	6. Professional Educator Conduct.
-	(1) A professional educator exhibits integrity and honesty in relationships with an LEA administrator or personnel.
	(2)(a) Failure to adhere to this Subsection (2) may result in licensing discipline in accordance with Rule R277-215. (b) A penalty shall be imposed most readily, if an educator has received a previous documented warning from the educator's employer.
	(c) The professional educator:
	(i) shall communicate professionally and with civility with a colleague, school and community specialist, administrator, and other personnel;
	(ii) shall maintain a professional and appropriate relationship and demeanor with a student, colleague, school community member, and parent;
	(iii) may not promote a personal opinion, personal issue, or political position as part of the instructional process in a manner inconsistent with
law;	
	(iv) shall express a personal opinion professionally and responsibly in the community served by the school;
	(v) shall comply with an LEA policy, supervisory directive, and generally-accepted professional standard regarding appropriate dress and
	at school and at a school-related event;
	(vi) shall work diligently to improve the educator's own professional understanding, judgment, and expertise;
	(vii) shall honor all contracts for a professional service;
	(viii) shall perform all services required or directed by the educator's contract with the LEA with professionalism consistent with LEA policy and
rule; and	
	(ix) shall recruit another educator for employment in another position only within a LEA timeline and guideline.
D277 515	2-7. Violations of Professional Ethics.
	(1) This rule establishes standards of ethical decorum and behavior for licensed educators in the state.
	(2) Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, to obtain a license or renew a license issued by the Board, a license applicant shall review this rule and
execute a	form as part of the licensure or renewal process verifying that the educator:
	(a) has read R277-515 and R277-516; and
	(b) understands that the educator's conduct is governed by R277-515 and R277-516.
	(3) An LEA shall:
	(a) annually train educators employed by the LEA on the Utah Educator Professional Standards described in Rules R277-515 and R277-516; and
	(b) provide written assurance of the training described in Subsection (3)(a) in accordance with R277-108.
	(4) Provisions of this rule do not prevent, circumvent, replace, nor mirror criminal or potential charges that may be issued against a professional
educator.	
	(5) The Board and Superintendent shall adhere to the provisions of this rule in licensing and disciplining a licensed Utah educator.
	(6) Reporting and employment provisions related to professional ethics are provided in:
	(a) Section 53G 11-406;
	(b) Section 53E-6-604;
	(c) Section 53G-8-503; and
	(d) Section R277-516-7.

KEY: educators, professional, standards

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: December 1, 2017

Notice of Continuation: November 6, 2017

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-501(1)(a); 53E-6; 53E-3-401(4)]